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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The President: The Assembly will first hear a statement by Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Her Excellency Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

Mrs. Bhutto (Pakistan): On behalf of 130 million Pakistanis, please accept, Sir, greetings on assuming the presidency of this session of the General Assembly.

I come to address the Assembly in the twilight of the twentieth century, where we seem to be, in the words of Charles Dickens, at "the best of times" and at "the worst of times". A century now comes to a close which witnessed two world wars, a Holocaust, hunger, hopelessness and the spectre of nuclear annihilation.

But there is another twentieth century that we should remember. The candle flickers on a century that brought mankind a technological and information revolution beyond our wildest dreams; a century of breakthroughs in medicine and health, in communication, in energy, in transportation and in agriculture; a century that witnessed the triumph of liberty over authoritarianism, the triumph of the free market over government control. One historian has called the twentieth century the age of extremes. Tested time and again, the world survived.

I come before this Assembly, at this time of transition from one century to the next — from the second millennium to the third — to speak of history, of justice and of morality. Today, the United Nations stands at the crossroads, not just of the calendar, but of the direction of the community of nations.

We confront three simultaneous challenges. The first one is the proliferation of conflicts, disputes and tensions among and within nations, and the accompanying rise of national, ethnic and religious prejudice, intolerance and arrogance. The second challenge is the persistent spread of poverty. The third challenge is the growing sense of alienation, the loss of people's hope and confidence that the world's Governments will address successfully the multifaceted problems inherent in the new technological era. The manner in which we address these problems will determine the quality of life that we bequeath our children.

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We remain deeply concerned at the conflicts and disputes in many parts of the world — in Bosnia, in Chechnya and in Azerbaijan. Our confidence in our ability to resolve conflicts has been visibly shaken after the experiences of Somalia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Liberia, Rwanda and Burundi.

We hope that the Middle East peace process, welcomed by the world, will not be reversed and that all parties will honour their obligations under the agreements signed.

The success of the Dayton Agreement and the restoration of peace and justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be an acid test of the world community's will to prevent aggression and genocide in the future.

Yet there is another place on Earth where there is a test of strength between the principles of law and freedom and the force of aggression and foreign occupation. After the creation of the United Nations, the people of Jammu and Kashmir were among the first to have their right to self-determination recognized by the Security Council. I should like to quote the words of the Security Council itself:

> "the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations." (*Security Council resolution 122 (1957), second preambular paragraph*)

After 50 years, the Kashmiri people still await the fulfilment of this resolution, of this commitment, of this promise.

The great African-American poet Langston Hughes asked fundamental questions about liberty. He asked:

> "What happens to a dream deferred?
> Does it dry up
> like a raisin in the sun?
> Or fester like a sore —
> And then run? (...)
> Maybe it just sags
> like a heavy load.
> Or does it explode?"

In 1989, as the winds of freedom swept across the globe, blowing away dictatorship, domination and occupation, a new generation of Kashmiris rose to demand their right to self-determination, a right that had passed from father to son, from mother to daughter — a torch rekindled from generation to generation. To suppress the brave Kashmiri youth, India sent in 600,000 military and paramilitary forces. The tools of murder, torture, rape, persecution, arson, incarceration and assassination attempts were ruthlessly used. But as the Nobel Peace Laureate Martin Luther King said,

> "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor. It must be demanded by the oppressed."

Forty thousand Kashmiris have given their lives in opposing this oppression during the last seven years alone. India has recruited and trained renegades to subvert the Kashmiri movement, to create dissension and to tarnish the image of the struggle for freedom. Under mounting international pressure, India sought this September to divert world opinion by organizing a sham election. Those very people who claim to be front-runners in the elections cannot even enter the valley without armed escorts, much less muster popular support.

This is what the world's media had to say. The *Arab News* of 8 September 1996 reported that its correspondent visited Baramula that morning and saw the entire town deserted. Not a single person was visible on the streets, which were being heavily patrolled. *The New York Times* of 7 September 1996 reported that while India hopes that the elections will blunt the guerrillas' appeal, there are many in Srinagar who say New Delhi is chasing an illusion. The *Economic Times*, an Indian publication, of 17 September 1996 reported that a number of booths in Anantnag and Pulwama recorded single-digit voting, even as late as 3 p.m. The *Statesman*, another Indian publication, reported on 22 September 1996 that Srinagar put up a stiff resistance to elections that day, and that polling was held in a curfew-like atmosphere on deserted streets. According to the Voice of America's broadcast of 27 September 1996, United States Senator Tom Harkin said that these elections were fraudulent and would not be considered to reflect the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmiri masses.

The Chairman of the Kashmir All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mir Umar Farooq, declared that such elections cannot be a substitute for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

The United Nations Security Council declared in resolution 122 (1957) that the organization of such elections does not "constitute a disposition of the State"

(*resolution 122 (1957), operative para. 1*) in terms of the plebiscite to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. This was confirmed by a recent study by the International Commission of Jurists.

I should like India to remember the words of the Frenchman André Breton, who said:

> "There is nothing with which it is so dangerous to take liberties as liberty itself."

So I stand before the United Nations General Assembly and urge "to thine own self be true", to thine own Charter be true; and to thine own resolutions be true.

India may argue that the Security Council resolutions that guaranteed a plebiscite to Jammu and Kashmir are old, but there is no statute of limitations on United Nations resolutions. Occupation, repression and annexation cannot nullify the actions of the Security Council itself. The resolutions of this body cannot be applied selectively only when politically expedient.

Pakistan calls on the United Nations to implement its own Security Council resolutions 47 (1948), 51 (1948), 80 (1950), 96 (1951), 98 (1952) and 122 (1957) — seven specific and binding resolutions guaranteeing self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir is the core issue that divides India and Pakistan. I had proposed a meaningful dialogue to the new Indian Prime Minister on his assumption of office, and was encouraged by his positive response. Unfortunately, the new Government persisted with the strategy of a sham election in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Kashmir dispute has led to four direct or indirect wars between India and Pakistan between 1947 and 1971. India has the third-largest army in the world today, almost all of which is deployed against my country Pakistan.

South Asia lacks a regional security system. We in Pakistan have made several proposals for conventional arms control: first, the negotiation of a mutually agreed ratio of forces; secondly, measures to prevent the possibility of a surprise attack; and thirdly, the adoption of agreed principles for conventional arms control in South Asia.

Over the past 30 years, Pakistan has formulated a series of proposals to contain proliferation of nuclear and missile technology in South Asia. All along, India argued that it opposed bilateral or regional measures and would accept only a global non-proliferation policy. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is exactly the kind of global measure for non-proliferation and disarmament that India had been championing for 40 years. Yet, unfortunately, India chose to veto the Treaty in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, and it opposed the Treaty at the United Nations General Assembly just last month. So now the world can see the reality.

Let me state that just as we are prepared to sign any and all nuclear treaties if India simultaneously signs with us, any step in nuclear escalation by our neighbour will find a response from us to preserve our national security.

I should like to take this opportunity to propose to this Assembly that it endorse the convening of a multilateral dialogue for peace and security in South Asia, with the participation not only of Pakistan and India, but of the five permanent members of the Security Council and other major Powers, such as Germany and Japan. This multilateral conference could cover three critical areas: first, the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and other bilateral problems between India and Pakistan; secondly, the promotion of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures; and thirdly, measures to promote nuclear restraint and avert the danger of a nuclear-arms race in South Asia. I believe that such multilateral talks offer a framework for genuine negotiations that can lead to a resolution of disputes, avert the nuclear threat and promote prosperity in South Asia. I hope this proposal will receive the support of this Assembly and of India.

A clear distinction has been made by the United Nations between terrorism and the legitimate struggle for national liberation. We in Pakistan will always be at the forefront of the effort to combat terrorism because we have frequently been victims of these crimes from across our own borders. This year alone we faced a series of cross-border terrorist attacks, but, by the grace of God, we were successful in arresting different rings of cross-border terrorists.

However, I should like to take this opportunity to express deep concern, on behalf of one billion peace-loving Muslims, at the propaganda from certain quarters. Some quarters are trying to present terrorism as peculiar to the followers of Islam; this is wrong. There is no place in Islam for acts of terrorism. However, let us acknowledge that in the post-cold-war period we are

witnessing the rise of extremist fringe groups in the East and in the West. Whether it be Hindu fundamentalism, Islamic militancy, Judaic extremism, Le Pen's racism in France, or the Oklahoma bombing in America, a number of youth are turning to acts of violence. We who believe in the policies of moderation, accommodation and tolerance must unite against this new threat of violence and terror. International mechanisms and systems to check the agents of terror need strengthening, and we must condemn terrorists and extremists with one voice, irrespective of their race, religion or creed.

Pakistan is the second-largest Muslim country in the world. It is a democracy, and the Government I lead is determined to turn Pakistan into a fortress of enlightenment, emancipation and social advancement. This is no easy task given our recent history. The Afghan war led to the proliferation of arms and militancy in our region, and to the rise of ethnic, sectarian and separatist forces in the country. It spawned a drug culture and failed to equip our youth for employment in the modern world.

Today we face, along with other countries of the world, the dangers of debt, deficit and demography. I am proud to say that we in Pakistan have brought down our population growth rate from 3.1 per cent to 2.9 per cent. We hope to reduce it further, to 2.6 per cent. In the last three years, we have brought down our deficit by three points, and a billion dollars of debt has been retired. However, the cost has been heavy.

Each year we have had to present a harsh budget to pull our country out of the quicksand of debt, deficit and demography. This year alone, out of new budgetary measures of PRs. 40 billion, PRs. 22 billion went to debt servicing. The example of Pakistan shows why increasing numbers of the world's population live in poverty and squalor, without access to clean drinking water, sanitation, schools or hospitals.

These bleak realities of debt servicing breed a despair and frustration that often manifest as random violence and terrorism. Despite this grinding poverty, the aspirations of the marginalized keep rising due to the communications revolution sweeping the world.

The world needs to devise a system under which Governments adopting international standards of trade and human values get proportionate relief in their debt. Shrinking aid flows have forced countries such as Pakistan to borrow capital at commercial interest rates. Indeed, debt servicing now accounts for 47 per cent of our budget. The negative impact of such reverse transfers needs to be redressed.

Similarly, it is time to renew and implement the pledge of the developed nations to devote at least 0.7 per cent of their gross national products for assistance to the developing countries. Even this target has now dwindled to a level of 0.3 per cent of the gross national product of the developed world.

We in Pakistan, committed to the dream of our founding fathers, have chosen the path of a federal parliamentary democracy wedded to the concept of social equality. Under a democratic Government, Pakistan has played a responsible role in combating terrorism and narcotics, promoting the rights of women and children, and working on non-proliferation issues such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We have done this while confronting the forces of ethnicity, sectarianism, separatism and militancy that were tearing at our social fabric. Those who sought to undermine our country's unity by undermining peace in our port city of Karachi have been defeated.

We have a clear agenda as we move towards the twenty-first century: a Pakistan dedicated to the rule of law and to safeguarding the rights of its women, children and minorities; a Pakistan providing equal opportunity for the advancement of its citizens by investing in health and in education; a Pakistan that has already attracted over $22 billion in investment pledges.

I speak to you, Mr. President, in the twilight of a century that awaits the dawn of a fresh one. As I speak, I dream of a third millennium in which the gap between rich and poor evaporates; in which illiteracy, hunger, malnutrition and disease are at long last conquered; in which every child is planned, wanted, nurtured and supported; and in which the birth of a girl is welcomed with the same joy as that of a boy. I dream of a millennium of tolerance and pluralism, in which people respect other people, nations respect other nations, and religions respect other religions.

That is the third millennium I see for my country and others — for all children. Let the United Nations be the infrastructure for making this dream into a reality.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Fernández Reyna (Dominican Republic) *(interpretation from Spanish):* The Dominican Republic was among the countries that founded the United Nations. But this is only the third time, in 51 years, that its Head of State has come to address the General Assembly. Perhaps the reason for this noticeable absence of our country during the many years that this great annual event has been held is that following the Second World War, the international system revolved around super-Power rivalry, giving rise to the cold war. In context, it is probable that our leaders felt that their presence here would have been merely symbolic, with no real importance.

That this may have been the case in the past, but the world has changed. From the dramatic transformations in the geopolitical environment, a multi-polar international system has emerged, in which the economy matters more than ideologies and military conflicts. This reorganization of the international system on the basis of strategic economic objectives has been accompanied by a scientific and technological revolution, a revolution of knowledge that spread across the planet and brought about the most profound change ever experienced in the history of humankind, turning the world into one large neighbourhood.

In the new international order that arose following the cold war, the Dominican Republic could not remain isolated. That is why we are here today: to proclaim to the world that the Dominican Republic is now actively joining the group of nations represented in this multilateral Organization, so that, through international contacts and exchange, it can contribute to forging a better future for humanity and, accordingly, a more promising future for Dominicans.

To ensure our participation in the various forums of the United Nations forums, exercising all the rights that have been bestowed upon us, we proceeded, first, to pay our financial debts in full. To the Dominican Republic, the payment of our arrears is evidence of our confidence and faith in the capability of the United Nations to play a role in the international arena to guarantee international peace and security as well as respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights.

Nevertheless, just as we understand that the world has changed, that there is a new international agenda governed by the common concerns of all peoples over environment preservation, population growth, respect for human rights, strengthening of democratic systems, recognition of women's rights, and the social and economic development of nations, we also understand that this Organization must be renewed and readapted to the new world circumstances.

Latin America and Africa do not have permanent representatives on the Security Council, and Asia has only one. This means that there is uneven representation in that important body, which is incomprehensible in an Organization whose Members enjoy equal footing, on the principle that they are all sovereign States. It is our humble suggestion that the Security Council should be extended to enable Asia, Africa and Latin America to have two permanent seats on that body and that the number of non-permanent representatives be increased to democratize the decision-making machinery in that forum for peace.

In one of his most frequently-cited works on the Caribbean, entitled *El Caribe, Frontera Imperial*, the former Dominican President and author, Juan Bosch, wrote as follows:

> "The history of the Caribbean is the history of the struggle of empires against the peoples of the region in order to rob them of their rich lands. It is also the history of the struggle of empires against one another to rob the possessions each one had conquered. Lastly, it is the history of the peoples of the Caribbean to free themselves from their imperial masters."

This direct contact with the major Powers over the course of five centuries, a product of these

confrontations, has marked the Caribbean, perhaps forever, with a particular stamp of fragmented histories, and different cultures and languages. Yet we are always seeking unity within diversity.

Recent years have brought greater understanding and closer bonds between us, based on the understanding that we have a common destiny. As proof of this, our country is a founding member of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), an organization bringing together nations that are very different both in ethnic terms and in development levels, and thus reflecting the richness and variety of our region.

We would be pleased to see formal contact with and backing from the United Nations for that recently created body, in support of the efforts we have made to strengthen our relations and to work for our peoples' development.

Similarly, we have been participating in the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States, which is made up of Caribbean countries that benefit from the Fourth Lomé Convention. This forum has carried out a series of regional projects financed with European Union resources.

As an observer, and aspiring full-fledged member, of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), we view with great interest the widening and deepening relationship between the United Nations and CARICOM. We urge that the necessary steps are be taken to intensify the cooperation and coordination between the two institutions, which would enable us to achieve our common goals.

The countries of the Caribbean are facing the challenges of current circumstances, as the advantages of access to markets are being eroded because of the implementation of World Trade Organization agreements, the effects of a single European market, the consolidation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the movement towards reciprocity and similar trends.

Our participation in preferential access schemes depends on the observance of established standards with regard to workers' rights, human rights, intellectual property rights, the environment and civil liberty — matters that go beyond economic considerations.

We have gained certain advantages from preferential trading with the United States and the European Union, as a result of greater prosperity that led to an increase in import demand from those countries and an increase in tourism in the Caribbean. By contrast, we must endure the complications of the new rules and harmonization standards that have come into force. We have not yet taken full advantage of the benefits deriving from such concessional agreements as the Fourth Lomé Convention, the Generalized System of Preferences, and the Caribbean Basin initiative.

Our high dependence on foreign trade, the shortage in the supply of goods and services and unsuitable marketing methods constitute elements of vulnerability that affect, to a greater or lesser extent, all the countries of the region. We must overcome these limitations and define areas in which we can be competitive. Strengthening cooperation is one way to support the Caribbean integration process and rectify such weaknesses.

When referring to the Caribbean, let us not forget the situation in Haiti, the country with which we share the island of Hispaniola. We view with sympathy the process of democratization that is unfolding in that country, and we appeal to the international community to do its utmost to assist in the huge task faced by the children of the country of Toussaint L'Ouverture in constructing a better future for their countrymen.

One of the first foreign-policy actions of our Government was to encourage a cooperative and friendly relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and we put in place the Joint Bilateral Commission. After a fruitful meeting, which took place a few day ago in Port-au-Prince, that Commission agreed to a series of technical exchange agreements in the fields of tourism, agriculture, trade and investment, sports and border and immigration matters. Furthermore, we defined the conditions for joint strategies to take advantage of funds provided by multinational sources, such as those granted by the European Union under the terms of the Fourth Lomé Convention.

I would now like to direct the attention of the General Assembly to a subject that just a few years ago was on the front pages of all the newspapers of the world and that, even though it still has a considerable impact on the effectiveness of development policies, has vanished from the world's attention: the problem of foreign debt. The countries of the region have carried out a series of adjustment programmes in an attempt to regain external financial solvency. Nonetheless, there are still considerable imbalances as a result of the burden of debt

servicing, without a corresponding recovery in the terms of exchange that would allow us to create greater resources through our exports.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, foreign debt increased 13-fold between 1964 and 1994. Today, thanks to our extraordinary efforts, our country is now current with its international creditors, which means that we are eligible for further external financing. However, being current with our payments to international credit organizations has meant that our Government has incurred greater social debts to the Dominican people. There are fewer resources to invest in education, health, housing and social security and, ultimately, to deal with the critical situation of poverty that affects most of our people.

In its 51 years of existence, the United Nations has made extraordinary efforts to eradicate bellicose conflicts in different parts of the world and to contribute to the maintenance of peace and international security. But great human sacrifice is inherent in the theatre of war, and our impoverished neighbourhoods have adopted the names of war-torn places, symbolizing the extent of their fight against misery. In the Dominican Republic the poor and marginalized neighbourhoods have adopted such names as Viet Nam, Katanga and Cambodia; none of them, of course, is called Sweden, Japan or Germany. This means that this international Organization's new role is to guarantee international peace and security through mechanisms to promote the economic and social development of the less fortunate nations.

For this reason, with respect to debt, our country believes that multilateral organizations that provide development assistance and the donor Governments, together with the debtors, must find more lasting solutions to the burden of foreign debt servicing, so that we can release resources that can immediately be used to fight poverty and to stop the deterioration of the environment.

We have made progress in that regard, and it is fair to recognize that the G-7, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the regional banks for development assistance, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, have consistently designed and implemented important mechanisms to alleviate the foreign-debt burden, among which the so-called Brady plan and the G-7 programmes for the reduction of bilateral debt stand out.

However, in the near future we will need to review some of the sacred principles prevalent in the international financial community now for many years, such as those related to the Paris Club cut-off date and the impossibility of debt restructuring with multilateral organizations. This affects especially the so-called least developed countries, which could receive preferential treatment in this regard. The Dominican Republic therefore urges all interested parties to move forward to enable the underdeveloped countries to implement viable programmes against poverty and marginalization, within a financially sustainable context.

In addition to the fight against poverty, at this stage of reforming the international system it is important to take all appropriate measures to fight terrorism and illegal drug trafficking, scourges that deeply affect the normal development of mankind. Recently, international drug cartels have tried to use Caribbean routes to carry out their illegal operations. The Dominican Republic has been taking all possible measures to prevent the use of its territory as a medium for drug trafficking and drug use. For Dominicans, drug use and trafficking are a national security problem, which we will fight with the necessary force to eliminate an evil that has become the great plague of mankind at the end of the twentieth century.

In expressing its willingness to play a more active role in the international system, the Dominican Republic also expresses its concern at the many unresolved conflicts in different parts of the world. We advocate a definitive and peaceful resolution of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina; of the search for peace in Middle East between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization; of cooperation and assistance with regard to situations such as those of Somalia, Burundi and Liberia. As to the Republic of China on Taiwan, we believe that due to its location in the centre of East Asia, its security and stability bear a close relation with the peace and prosperity of that region, and we therefore encourage both the sides along the Taiwan Strait to resume constructive dialogue with a view to achieving mutual cooperation and understanding. We believe that the parallel participation of both sides in the United Nations would be conducive to maintaining peace.

We stand at the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, which will bring new challenges as well as new opportunities for human progress, and an Organization such as the United Nations has always served to stimulate the noblest of human aspirations. The Dominican Republic, trusting in God and in the creative capacity of its people, aspires to be a spokesman and an instrument for channelling the ideals of justice, peace,

democracy and prosperity, which inspire the civilized nations of the world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I now call on the Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal and for Senegalese living abroad, His Excellency Mr. Moustapha Niasse.

Mr. Niasse (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): Your noteworthy election, Sir, to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session is an eloquent and solemn tribute from the Members of our Organization to your great country, Malaysia. Your intellectual and moral qualities, your faith in the United Nations and your vast experience in international relations guarantee, in our view, success in the work of this session. For all these reasons, Senegal, which enjoys a strong relationship of friendship and cooperation with your country, is happy to convey to you, through me, warm congratulations. We assure you of our full support in the achievement of the lofty mission entrusted to you.

To your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, I wish to express our profound gratitude for the effectiveness, competence and the commitment with which he discharged his mandate during a historic and particularly productive session.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali is an ardent champion of peace and cooperation among peoples, and his commendable work for the United Nations should be emphasized today, to encourage perseverance along this path. Moreover, the African Heads of State recently adopted at Yaoundé a statement recommending his re-election to a second term of office as United Nations Secretary-General.

Mr. Fernández Estigarribia (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The international climate today strikes us as one of those special situations that should awaken our consciences, inviting us to enhance our efforts and clarity of vision to ensure humanity a future of peace, solidarity and cooperation.

Indeed, we are meeting at a time conducive to major changes in the life of our Organization. The most striking illustration of our common desire for reform was expressed here last year, during the solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It was in that spirit that during the commemorative meeting of the General Assembly some of the most authoritative voices in the world — those of 128 Heads of State and Government — forcefully reaffirmed their profound faith in the United Nations, its principles and objectives.

Furthermore, these leaders unanimously called for in-depth reflection so that we might enter the twenty-first century with a restructured, reinvigorated Organization, equipped with the necessary human, material and financial resources to more effectively accomplish the lofty mission of an Organization that harmonizes the complementary efforts of Member States in order to achieve new goals in a context of freedom and active solidarity.

Guaranteeing peace and collective security; developing friendly relations among nations based on shared values; promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and developing varied forms of cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields — these were the dreams of those who, 50 years ago, created the United Nations. They are still today the foundation, the moral basis and the justification for the objectives we must continue to pursue in these final years of the twentieth century, a century that, despite two world wars, was one of prodigious discoveries — a century that saw man walk on the moon, explore the environs of Mars and make significant progress in combating disease.

However, we must agree that today's world is not the world of 50 years ago. This one presents new and widespread dangers but also offers different possibilities. We must therefore close ranks, minimize our differences and combine our efforts, as peoples, nations, States and communities.

Today, all nations face an enormous paradox: on the one hand, countries have never been closer to one

another due to the increasing globalization of technology; on the other hand, the fragmentation of nationalities has triggered the resurgence of new forms of confrontation and conflict, as well as misunderstandings and serious delays in the evolution of continents.

During the cold-war period, it was generally considered that the main threats to peace would come from wars between States, and the greatest fear was that a nuclear conflict would break out and devastate the planet.

The end of the cold war gave rise to a sense of trust in the advent of a world free from the spectre of a nuclear cataclysm, which we welcomed with optimism. We shared the belief that the many regional conflicts could be resolved quickly once they were no longer fuelled by unbridled military assistance and by positions of continual escalation in both hemispheres.

Today, unfortunately, we are forced to recognize that the state of the world for the most part belies these optimistic visions; many old conflicts continue to resist the international community's attempts to settle them. Pernicious and persistent intra-State conflicts have broken out. The conflicts in Africa and in the former Yugoslavia illustrate this situation.

Indeed, from Angola to Somalia, from Burundi and Rwanda to Liberia, Africa is beset by conflicts whose nature, as we are forced to recognize, prevents the proper and effective implementation of the solutions proposed.

It is true that significant progress has been made in some of these conflicts, particularly in Angola and to a lesser extent in Rwanda. We need to continue our efforts in this direction.

In other conflicts, the road to peace remains uncertain. In Liberia, the situation is extremely murky due to the difficulty of managing conflicts between rival factions, despite the initiatives of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African countries in the area.

However, we must not become discouraged. At the recent Ministerial meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took some courageous decisions. These, we hope, will create new conditions conducive to the normalization of the situation in that country through the organization of free and democratic elections, with the full support of the entire international community.

Turning to Burundi, it is clear that the measures prescribed by the United Nations and by the OAU have not managed to end the bloodshed, nor did they prevent the military *coup de force* of 25 July last. This is regrettable and we must take action.

However, we must not lose faith. Given this new situation, Senegal, like the African countries of the Great Lakes region, calls for the restoration of constitutional order and reaffirms its conviction that any solution to the crisis in Burundi requires the initiation — despite any feelings of resentment — of a free and transparent dialogue in good faith between the various parties to the conflict.

In Europe, the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia represented, before it was torn apart, a successful example of a pluralistic and harmonious ethnic and religious coexistence, which was the pride of the world. It was in the name of these values that, from the beginning of the conflict, Senegal rejected any notion of partitioning Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that is why it welcomed with great hope the signing of the Dayton Agreement. It is in this spirit that the momentum for peace of this Agreement must be consolidated.

In this regard, the smooth conduct of the elections of 14 September was an important step. The prosecution, arrest and sentencing of war criminals by the international criminal Tribunal remains a major test for the international community. More than that, is it a matter of proving that our community is able to implement Security Council decisions.

Against this background, Senegal, my country, will continue, as it has in the past, to do what it can within the framework of the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to bring about the advent of a Bosnia and Herzegovina at peace with itself, so that the seeds of peace and stability can finally bear fruit in this war-torn land and throughout the rest of the former Yugoslavia.

Exactly one year ago we welcomed with relief the signing of the Washington and Taba agreements — important milestones for the establishment of peace and reconciliation between the peoples of the Middle East. The door thus opened must never close again. Today, regrettably, doubts and the fear of returning to a past marked by war and hatred are beginning to resurface. Let us put an end to these threats while there is still time.

While my country has always believed, and continues to believe, that some realities are inescapable — the existence of Israel is one of them — it is also of the opinion that the security of that State can, in the long term, be assured only in the framework of respect for, and implementation of, the current peace process, which should lead to the definitive creation of a sovereign and independent Palestinian state, a fully-fledged member of the international community.

It is therefore up to the new Israeli Government, elected in May 1996, to make decisive efforts so that the flame of peace, ignited just recently with such courage and clear-sightedness, continues to inspire the leaders and peoples of Israel and Palestine towards a Middle East that builds its future on a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and friendship.

Given the changes in the world since the fall of the Berlin Wall and given the new types of conflicts, which require a new approach to the management of our collective security system, our Organization, the United Nations, must be understood, supported and strengthened.

Increasingly, the United Nations has been called on to create a new generation of peacekeeping operations. The Blue Helmets have been joined by civil experts who provide political, economic, social and humanitarian assistance, thus contributing to the stabilization of situations and conflicts as well as to the search for a political settlement to conflicts through national reconciliation whenever necessary.

Accordingly, my country, Senegal, will continue to take part with resolve in this noble mission in the service of peace, with the conviction that has always inspired our international policy. This same desire prompted its participation, with 36 other countries, in the standby forces system initiated recently by the Secretary-General, as well as its commitment to the establishment of an early warning and rapid reaction system.

Guided by these same principles, Senegal continues to make a modest contribution to the attainment of the goal of comprehensive and effective disarmament. Senegal's recent admission to the Conference on Disarmament, when that body was expanded, attests to its will to work together with all peace-loving nations to build a better future in a world free from weapons of mass destruction.

In this respect, I wish to welcome warmly the agreement concluded here on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly since it meets the concerns of all Member States of our Organization, specifically the African States. In a spirit of remarkable unanimity, African States signed in Cairo last March the Pelindaba agreement on the denuclearization of the continent.

In the same spirit, the international community recently took an important step to halt the nuclear arms race with the adoption by the General Assembly on 10 September 1996 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which my country has just signed on 26 September 1996, here in New York.

However, it is a fact that at a time when the international community faces new challenges stemming from the end of the cold war, our Organization will increasingly be asked to play a more central role in world affairs. Naturally this means that meaningful improvements must be made in the work of the Organization; most importantly, the principle of universality should be implemented methodically and effectively. Accordingly, the restructuring and democratization of the Security Council must remain a priority goal. This central body of the United Nations must reflect in its decision-making process the concerns of the entire membership of our Organization. Its reform must lead to increased transparency and a better representation by all regions of the world.

Guided by the ideal of the universality of the United Nations, Senegal supports the request of the Republic of China to be admitted to membership in our Organization, and, generally speaking, to membership in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. It is inarguable, in our opinion, that that State, in view of its socio-economic performance, its development level, its commitment to democratic values and its behaviour in international affairs meets all the criteria and conditions set forth by the Charter of the United Nations for admission to membership. This admission to membership, should it occur, would make an important contribution to stabilizing international relations in that part of Asia and would allow for an unprecedented economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the countries of South-East Asia and Africa. Its admission would in no way jeopardize the efforts made by the international community for peace and development in the world.

The values of peace, freedom and economic and social justice, which 50 years ago inspired the creation of

our Organization, must now more than ever remain the basis of our common action towards a life of dignity for all. The post-cold-war experience has taught us once again that the many facets of underdevelopment remain a serious threat to international peace and security.

Now that globalization and interdependence are phenomena recognized by all, we must understand that the destiny of humankind is one and indivisible. This obvious truth must persuade us to seek, in a spirit of solidarity, joint solutions to the persistent problems of underdevelopment. The series of major world conferences set to conclude next November with the World Food Summit — a positive initiative welcomed by my country — is an encouraging sign of the international community's resolve to meet these challenges in the best interests of the peoples of the world, on the basis of a comprehensive, integrated approach to human development.

We need now to maintain and strengthen that spirit by mobilizing additional financial resources, without which the commitments undertaken will remain a dead letter, which would betray the legitimate hopes to which they gave rise. We must find an early and comprehensive solution to the severe debt crisis. The components of the problem are fairly clear today. The sustained structural-adjustment efforts made by our country will remain futile and ineffective if external factors such as the debt burden and the deterioration of the terms of trade continue seriously to hinder our development prospects.

The Agenda for Development gives us a new opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to world peace and stability by defining a comprehensive framework for action based on economic justice, social well-being, the protection of human rights and the preservation of the environment.

The development of Africa, and I cannot overemphasize this point, is the primary responsibility of the Africans themselves. That is why in many African countries today Governments continue with determination to carry out bold and difficult reforms, reflected, *inter alia*, in the improved and more rational use of public funds, in the opening of cur economies to international trade and in the creation of conditions conducive to private enterprise and to the transparent management of public affairs with, most importantly, all sectors of society participating in the work of national development, in the interests of all. In this regard, we must pay tribute to the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for the assistance and support they have extended to our countries. For these ongoing efforts to be successful, they must be supported by increased official development assistance, substantial debt relief and by the lifting of barriers and other protectionist measures. These three areas require dynamic action on the part of the international community.

Senegal is firmly convinced that we can combat African pessimism if we are resolved jointly to promote a mutually beneficial partnership for the recovery of an Africa with enormous potential, which, if tapped, would offer our partners real opportunities. It was this conviction, let us recall, that prompted the Head of State of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, to take the initiative during his first term of office as Acting Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, to request the convening for the first time of a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the economic situation in Africa. That is the light in which my country sees the two initiatives devoted to Africa: the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the Special Initiative for Africa, launched by the Secretary-General in March 1996.

Furthermore, we noted that the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa at this session gave a very frank assessment of what must be done to make this project a genuine framework for multilateral cooperation and a source of inspiration for a fruitful partnership for development.

In conclusion, I should like to touch on the United Nations financial crisis, which has become a source of major concern for all our States. Since the causes of the situation have been discussed at length in this very Hall, I do not believe it is necessary to recall them. However, one thing is very clear. At a time when our Organization is committed on several fronts, both to restoring peace and to strengthening its role as the primary framework and instrument for the advent of the new world order, its financial stability is essential to enable us jointly to meet the major challenges ahead.

Therefore, my country, Senegal, would like once again to appeal to all Member States regularly to meet their financial obligations. In this regard, it is essential that the credibility of the United Nations not be impugned at a time when, individually and collectively, we have such high hopes for the future of humankind.

Once again, the effectiveness of the United Nations will depend upon our common resolve to harmonize our own interests to achieve our shared goals in strict

accordance with the fundamental principles of the San Francisco Charter.

As our President, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, has said repeatedly, Senegal will continue, as it has in the past, to work tirelessly for the attainment of the ideals of peace, justice and solidarity, and to reaffirm and seek compliance with all the principles on which a true international community, sharing a common destiny, is based.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. David Levy.

Mr. Levy (Israel) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first, Sir, to congratulate Mr. Razali Ismail on his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session and to wish him every success. I would also like to thank his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the outstanding manner in which he carried out his duties.

The succession of Governments, which is a defining principle of Israeli democracy, has recently brought to power a new Government in Israel. A section of the international community has deemed this democratic Israeli choice impertinent, suggesting that it would work against regional peace. In response to this prejudice I would like to make a simple statement: Israel is united in its quest for peace. It is not a question of good people and peace-seekers on one side and mischief-makers and people who reject peace on the other. In Israel, those on the left and right converge in their quest for peace, their sensibilities and differences notwithstanding.

I wish to raise the recent history of the Israeli-Arab peace process in order to dispel any ambiguity regarding the practice of peace in Israel and to show that the new majority cannot be disqualified from efforts to achieve peace. The peace between Israel and Egypt is a founding landmark of coexistence between Israelis and Arabs. The Madrid Conference, to which I had the honour of contributing, also bears the special stamp of the pioneers of peace, to whose achievements the new majority in Israel are the direct heirs.

The firm commitment of the Netanyahu Government with respect to the Oslo accords is also closely tied to the peace process, which our immediate neighbours, Egypt and Jordan, helped to shape. However, my Government's swift engagement in the peace process has been minimized, reduced and distorted. The meetings that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence of the State of Israel and I have had with the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority have been met with sarcasm and given only secondary importance. Those meetings dealt precisely with the substance and the content of peace. They initiated the ways and means necessary for the achievement of peace. They amplified the resonance of the Oslo accords and extended mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition to new sections of society and Israeli political classes. It is Israel's determination to reach peace according to the policies and fundamental guidelines of the new Government.

On its road to peace, the Government of Israel is guided by several principles, which I would like to expound. For us, security is neither an obsession nor a blind belief. It touches upon our very existence in a region where, unfortunately, threats and instability still rage. Security must be the cornerstone in the architecture of peace. It cannot, under any circumstances, tag along behind a process in which terrorism and violence have not yet spoken their last word.

Negotiations themselves, through their joint creative energies, allow us to control the dangers and drifts. The battle against terrorism and its infrastructures and its sources of financing and assistance is not only for us to fight. We solemnly call upon the United Nations relentlessly to pursue active cooperation in the struggle against terrorism and in condemning it unequivocally. It is imperative to preserve the Israeli-Palestinian peace process free from violence.

I have just returned from the Washington summit, held at the initiative of President Clinton. On behalf of the Government and the people of Israel, I wish, from this rostrum, to thank the President and the Secretary of State of the United States for their exemplary contribution to peace by bringing the parties together and for their profound commitment to reinvigorating the peace process. In this respect the role and contribution of the United States remain of great importance.

On Sunday the Israeli and Palestinian teams will convene again in an attempt to resolve their differences in respect of the various agreements. We are responsible to our people and to our whole region in this matter. We must therefore display good faith and mutual understanding in order to fulfil our mission, and to send out the message of stable peace and lasting security.

The Washington summit reconfirmed the principles and guidelines for the negotiations. I associate myself wholeheartedly with President Clinton's statement that face-to-face negotiations in a constructive atmosphere are the key to resolving problems. A future free of hostility and the renunciation of violence: these represent the very basis of mutual efforts for peace.

The choice is in our hands. Will we opt for cooperation, progress, real peace and security? Or will we revert to the dark days of conflict, confrontation and violence, thereby putting an end to all hope? For its part, Israel has chosen hope.

Another major principle in our search for peace is the will of the partners to allow a tangible peace to exist. Regional cooperation is a critical factor in ensuring peace and stability. Israel entertains no dreams of economic hegemony; it wishes to play its fair role in the creation of regional cooperation. This is a basic principle of normalization. Peace and normalization are one and indivisible. Consequently, if we are to follow the logic of peace and dialogue, we cannot risk having normalization taken hostage and brought to a halt.

Israel makes no secret that normalization of its relations with the Arab world must be fully implemented. This means comprehensive political and economic relations, and the broadest possible intellectual, cultural and spiritual acceptance. Some of our neighbours still view Israel as a body foreign to the region. Normalization must erase forever the residue of this ideological negation. Normalization is the indispensable cement for keeping together the edifice of peace.

One of our immediate goals is the resumption of negotiations with Syria on the basis of the Madrid principles, which inaugurated the dialogue between the two countries. We recognize Syria's important role in the establishment of lasting peace in our region. From this rostrum, we call upon President Al-Assad to resume negotiations.

As to Lebanon, we have no territorial disputes with Lebanon. We are committed to its sovereignty. Lebanon can be fertile ground for the restoration of confidence and the building of peace.

Egypt and its President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, are our partners in peace. They are the authors and actors that have always been engaged in all stages of the peace process.

Jordan is unquestionably a decisive factor in the building of peace in our region. A man of peace and dialogue, His Majesty King Hussein has actively supported the peace process and has provided a vital guarantee of continuity. The Washington summit enjoyed his complete support.

On the long path to peace, the country of Morocco, the country of my birth and family roots, has always walked and illuminated the path of Israeli-Arab reconciliation. The vision displayed by His Majesty King Hassan II has left its distinctive mark on the entire Arab-Israeli dialogue. The Moroccan King will continue his essential role and breathe into peace the remarkable inspiration of his solidarity.

I would like to pay tribute also to the active support of Tunisia. Oman, Qatar and, more recently, Mauritania have all helped to consolidate peace efforts.

The peace process has benefitted from the considerable support of the co-sponsors, the United States and Russia, and from the active and positive contribution of the European Union and Norway and of Powers such as Japan and Canada.

Once again, I wish solemnly to reaffirm Israel's irreversible commitment and determination to pursue the path of peace.

Since the dawn of history our region has been a meeting point of diverse civilizations and cultures, a vibrant wellspring of progress for all of humanity. At the crossroads of continents and countries, the Middle East must, in times of peace, discover again the genius of this place and the richness of its edifying civilizations. Arabs and Jews must pool their knowledge and wisdom to regenerate their vocation as the promoters of life and humanity.

Through international cooperation, Israel is sharing with young countries from Africa to Asia, from Latin America to China, its achievements and assets in the fields of agriculture, health and science.

We hope that the day will come when a regional security system will be established in the Middle East to provide a cooperative multilateral response to all security problems. The advantage of this regional approach is that it is based on direct negotiations between the States of the region. The first stage is to build confidence, and thereafter we must put arms control and disarmament

mechanisms into place. For this reason, Israel welcomed the establishment of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group as part of the multilateral talks. We hope that in the future this framework will encompass all States of the Middle East.

Israel's position is defined by a dual mandate: to set ambitious objectives, and to pursue them pragmatically and realistically. After peace and reconciliation have been established among all the States of the region, Israel will endeavour to establish in the Middle East a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missiles. This demilitarization will be subjected to rigorous verification.

Negotiations to establish such a zone will commence following the signing of bilateral peace accords between Israel and all the countries of the region. In the meantime Israel will implement confidence-building measures that will increase openness and transparency and, thereby, make a contribution to easing tensions and preventing all armed conflict.

We generally prefer regional security arrangements. However, Israel is in favour of the implementation of certain aspects of international mechanisms for arms control and disarmament where appropriate. Accordingly, Israel signed the Convention on conventional weapons and adopted a moratorium on the manufacture and export of anti-personnel landmines. It has also signed the Treaty against the use of chemical weapons and now the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Israel will consider ratification of that Treaty depending upon developments in the region, particularly the adoption of that Treaty by the major countries.

Israel has thus demonstrated its determination to be involved, whenever possible, in the efforts of the international community to prevent the spread of conventional and non-conventional weapons.

Israel strongly desires to be an active and fully-fledged member of the family of nations represented in this Organization. We note with regret and deep disappointment that the question of our membership in a regional group has still not been resolved. Israel is thus deprived of the right available to all States Members of the United Nations to participate on an equal footing in all its activities. This impairs the principle of equality among sovereign nations under the Charter of the United Nations. I hope that this injustice will be rectified and that Israel will finally be able to act within this Organization on the same footing as all other Member States.

It is with the subject of Jerusalem, whose very name is invoked in so many prayers for peace, that I wish to conclude. Jerusalem is the cradle of the three great religions. We reaffirm this status daily by respecting and ensuring total freedom of worship and spiritual expression for all believers. It is an entirely shared religious reality to which Israel has made a profound contribution.

Jerusalem, the horizon of our dreams and prayers, has throughout our exile and dispersions constituted the summit of our collective being. Capital of Israel, both in ancient and modern times, never has Jerusalem been the capital of any country other than Israel.

Rarely if ever has any sovereign State been denied the right to freely determine its capital. Israel, the people of peace restored to sovereignty after 2,000 years of exile, has returned to the city of peace, *Yerushalayim*: Jerusalem. Thereby it demonstrates its unswerving devotion to its ancestral capital to renew its psalm of peace: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem". We shall tirelessly dedicate all our efforts to that search for peace.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call next on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport of Barbados, Her Excellency The Honourable Billie Miller.

Ms. Miller (Barbados): It is my pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Razali on his election as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. The Barbados delegation shares fully the confidence expressed in his leadership and assures him of its cooperation in the work of this Assembly.

Let me also warmly commend his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his outstanding stewardship of the fiftieth session, including the Special Commemorative Meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. That celebration, which brought together 128 Heads of State or Government, stands as a fitting memorial to the historic event.

My country's knowledge of and appreciation for the United Nations system has deepened since we had the honour to host the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing

States in 1994. The Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action outlined the way forward for the relationship between small island developing States and the international community. The Barbados Conference was the first and to date the only follow-up Global Conference to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, because it was recognized that small island developing States have a critical role to play in sustainable development.

Barbados and other members of the Alliance of Small Island States will unremittingly pursue the follow-up to the Programme of Action because our survival depends on it. We have, however, been disappointed to note that so much of the promise of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has as yet gone unfulfilled, and we will engage the international community further to ensure that our concerns are addressed.

Barbados welcomes the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the establishment of the International Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. This new regime for the world's oceans is of particular interest to us and to small island developing States in general, because of the critical link between the maritime environment and our land mass. Small island developing States are in some ways just coastal zones, and as such have a particularly intimate relationship with the oceans, upon which we depend for food and which are pivotal to our tourism industry.

It is in this context that we view with apprehension the use of the Caribbean Sea for the trans-shipment of nuclear and other hazardous materials. While we understand the needs of countries to dispose of and reprocess waste materials, and we recognize their right to do so under Law of the Sea, International Maritime Organization and International Atomic Energy Agency regulations, we fear the consequences of accidents for an environment which is so highly fragile. The Caribbean presents a unique combination of factors which demand that it be treated with special care: large numbers of small island developing States, a semi-enclosed sea subject to violent seasonal storms, and the presence of one of the most intensively used shipping passages, the Panama Canal. The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community have repeatedly declared their opposition to the use of the Caribbean Sea for trans-shipment of nuclear materials. We look forward to deepened dialogue with flag States and other concerned States and organizations to ensure that we are all aware of what is being shipped, when and where, and how best to manage it.

The vulnerability of Caribbean micro-States is further increased by narco-trafficking. This illicit trade threatens the very existence of our democracies, a point that was reinforced earlier this year when the United Nations International Drug Control Programme held a conference in Barbados on drug enforcement and rehabilitation cooperation in the Caribbean.

Regional cooperation is the responsible and effective means for implementing international agreements dealing with this matter. The response of the international community to our peculiar set of problems has been encouraging, but it must continue to be upgraded. We suffer not so much because we are major end-users, but because of our strategic location in this traffic. We will continue in our efforts, with the limited resources we have at our disposal, to ensure that the drug traffic does not undermine the foundations of our democracies. We will not stand accused of not cooperating with our partners, but neither will we allow our hard-fought sovereignty to be sacrificed in the tug-of-war between the moral and societal imperative to curtail demand and the need to reduce supply.

As we herald the International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, this delegation is appalled that in 1996, despite the advances in technology and the new wealth being generated by the forces of globalization, millions of children still do not have access to the most basic necessities.

Just as we argued at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) that humankind has a right to housing, Barbados fully supports the notion that individuals have a right to adequate nourishment. We look forward to the World Food Summit later this year in Rome as being the catalyst for major change towards alleviating hunger.

Women are among the most impoverished groups in our societies, and gender equality is a major vehicle for achieving sustainable human development. Although Barbados ranks high on the human development index, particularly as it relates to gender equality, the Beijing Platform for Action remains for us a critical policy and action framework.

The landmark fiftieth session was an occasion for solemn reflection on the mission and performance of the

United Nations and for a constructive assessment of the challenges which confront the Organization in the post-cold-war world. Member States have left no doubt about the critical role that the United Nations must continue to play in fostering global peace and security and promoting sustainable development. They have recognized that, notwithstanding its shortcomings, this Organization remains the only universal mechanism which offers the hope of achieving the goals for humanity enshrined in its Charter. The task with which we have been charged is to revitalize the United Nations and to strengthen its capacity to meet the new demands of rapid global change. My delegation therefore attaches the greatest importance to the Working Groups established by the General Assembly to advance the reform process, in order to make the world a more peaceful place and to improve the Organization's effectiveness in promoting economic and social development.

Reform is now the order of the day. No country or institution can neglect the reality of globalization or the technological revolution that drives this process. It poses major challenges for countries and societies, particularly small developing countries. We recognize only too well our own vulnerability to marginalization, stemming from intense global competition and reform of major global institutions, including the United Nations. Barbados therefore follows with special interest the consultations taking place in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and other Matters Related to the Security Council. The question of equitable representation of small States is of particular concern, and we are studying closely those proposals which take this concept into account. At the same time, we note with satisfaction the broad convergence of views on enlargement of the Council, and the importance being given to measures to improve its working methods and procedures, to enhance its democratic and representative character, and to foster greater transparency.

We also recognize the important consultations which are proceeding in the other Working Groups. When this task is successfully completed, we envisage a United Nations restructured and re-energized, to accelerate economic and social development in a world where absolute poverty still afflicts over one billion people who exist on less than one dollar a day.

Commitment to reform notwithstanding, the capacity of the Organization to support this global agenda is being hampered by recurring financial crises. The United Nations now finds itself at the crossroads. In April 1996, the Secretary-General cautioned that the United Nations was on the brink of financial disaster. Regrettably, this outlook has not markedly improved to date. Given this prospect, it is clear that resolute action to address this crisis can no longer be postponed if the integrity of the Organization and the viability of its mandates are to be preserved. In our view, we have debated far too long obligations which are so clearly spelt out in the United Nations Charter.

Barbados holds firmly to the position advanced by the Group of 77 and China that the crisis derives essentially from the Organization's cash flow problem, created by the failure of major Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time. More generally, we support the principle of periodic review of the scale of assessments, designed to ensure the long-term financial viability of the United Nations, based on the principle of capacity to pay; but we do not believe that this should be linked conditionally to the issue of arrears as we search for a solution to the present crisis.

This Assembly will once again review the many unresolved problems which dominate the global political scene. The world still awaits the dawn of the new era of peace envisaged at the end of the cold war. As a small developing country, Barbados is ever conscious of the peaceful domestic climate it has enjoyed since independence in 1966, which has fostered its economic and social development. We therefore share the anguish of the international community for those countries where internal strife and regional conflict, and their attendant human suffering, continue to deny economic and social progress to millions of their people.

My delegation therefore welcomes the peace process which is being implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton accords. Though still fragile, this Agreement, we think, offers the best prospects for peace so far, and we hope for an end to a conflict which has threatened the very credibility of the United Nations. We hope that the recent elections will be a further major step in the building of the confidence and trust so crucial to long-term reconciliation.

Recent outbreaks of violence in the Middle East have renewed our anxieties about peace in that region. The international community yearns for the day when a full and lasting peace is consolidated in this entire region, bringing to an end the long cycle of violence. We urge all the parties to re-embark on this journey and redouble

their efforts to recapture the momentum of the peace process, which has so far brokered agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.

In Africa, a number of countries remain locked in prolonged conflict, which has smothered the democratic process and stalled the development effort. We urge the international community to do all it can to stem the explosive situation in the Great Lakes region. Without peace there can be no development, and without development there can be no lasting peace. We therefore hope for an early breakthrough for peace in affected countries, not only in Africa but also in other regions of the world, so that the urgent task of development can be resumed.

In our own hemisphere, the situation in Haiti continues to be of special concern to countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region. Thanks to the resolve of the Haitian people and the support of the international community, a viable political and development infrastructure has begun to take root. It holds the promise of nurturing the still-fragile democracy and accelerating economic and social progress which has eluded the majority of the Haitian people for too long. Speaking on behalf of member States of the Caribbean Community during consideration of this question at the fiftieth session, Barbados cautioned that the road ahead for Haiti would be long and difficult, that progress would be uneven, and that sustained support from the international community would continue to be crucial.

We believe that this view is still valid. My delegation therefore welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1063 (1996) of 28 June 1996, which established the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti until 30 November 1996. It will provide continuing support to secure and maintain a stable environment that will buttress the democratic and development process. However, come next month, the international community cannot wash its hands of Haiti, declare victory and leave. As recent events have shown, stability, to say nothing of democracy, remains a fragile sapling that will continue to require care and protection. We urge that Haitians, who were among the first in this hemisphere to attempt to define their own post-colonial political system, not be forgotten in the post-cold-war world.

Developing countries look to a reformed United Nations to play a major role in shaping the global society of the twenty-first century. It must build on the considerable policy consensus that already exists on the broad priorities of its agenda, including the link between peace and development, poverty eradication, sustainable development, social justice and democracy, issues of governance, and women. It must continue to nurture the participatory impulse of civil society, which has emerged as a major influence on the work of the Organization and on national public policy. It must propel this heightened concern with the human condition in all its dimensions to the top of the global agenda.

Barbados shares these priorities for full human development by fostering the empowerment of all its people as it expands its economic and social development. At the same time, it has taken steps to review and deepen its democratic and human rights traditions through the establishment of Commissions on Social Justice and Reform of the Constitution, respectively. These inquiries will assess the extent to which the promise of a good and just society has been fulfilled after 30 years of independence. They reflect the fact that we assign the highest priority to social policy and to the cause of human rights and democracy.

The United Nations faces many challenges, but these are not insurmountable if we renew our faith in its mission. Barbados believes that this Organization is still our best hope for fostering peace and social justice and for coordinating the management of global problems. Given the agenda before us, we believe this is a time for more, not less, intensive global cooperation — cooperation that only the United Nations can foster. We remain committed to its principles and will do our part to help fulfil the promise of the Charter.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Shaikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa.

Shaikh Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure of extending to Mr. Razali Ismail and to his friendly country, Malaysia, my sincere congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. I wish him success in conducting the proceedings of the session and assure him of my delegation's readiness to cooperate fully with him in achieving our Organization's objectives and purposes.

I also take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his sincere efforts in guiding the proceedings of the previous session.

It is also my pleasure to express my country's gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless and dedicated efforts to enhance the Organization's role and standing and to further the Charter's objectives, especially those related to the maintenance of world peace and security. I hope that he will continue to hold this important position and to do this good work.

This session convenes a year after the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which was celebrated in the middle of a decade that has, from the start, witnessed rapid changes and diverse trends arising from the remnants of the cooperation and cold-war conflict that have marked half a century.

The international community has dealt with the challenges this historic burden with a twofold response. First, it has sought to reform and develop the United Nations system so as to enable it to fulfil its role in the light of these changes. Secondly, it has made concerted efforts by convening world conferences to deal with critical issues relating to the future of mankind, such as the environment, development, population, trade, social development, women and children. Despite these efforts, which have continued for several years, this twofold response has proved woefully inadequate to alleviate the ills that have slowed the progress and political, economic and social development of the human race.

Given the way the United Nations was established and the manner in which the international system has evolved since the 1940s, this phenomenon should not come as a surprise. The international community has been unable to absorb the intense impact of the major transformations of the present decade, which have relied heavily on the foundations and parameters of the current system of international relations. This means that the international community still needs some time — not necessarily a little — in which to fathom the similarities and diversities of national interests that influence the contemporary international political system.

In order to be able to understand these political ramifications in their historical context, we must consider this phenomenon in the context of the flexibility and inflexibility that characterize the structure of the contemporary system of international relations. That is because the crisis afflicting current international political relations has been caused largely by the persistence of complex political and historical dilemmas that have continued to interact within a system of international relations based on visions formulated by the allies before the end of the Second World War.

The Powers that are influential in the international arena presently appear to be reviewing the basis on which the present international system was founded, with a view to reconfiguring, rather than abolishing, current and future global imperatives. The underlying purpose of the system that emerged in the 1940s was fundamentally to address regional and international security problems in all their political and economic dimensions. It is a fact that the Allied Powers formulated their vision in the 1940s on the premise that security and stability in the regional context were basically associated with the creation of a number of international institutions, most notably the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the financial institutions that came into being as a result of agreements reached at a number of historic conferences.

Despite this association and the new intellectual, political and economic trends brought about by the changes, the structural notions of the international system have not developed in tandem with the requirements of human development, as manifested by the communications revolution, the exchange of ideas, the flow of information and the technological applications that have influenced international relations in various ways.

The historical concept of the link between national and regional security could serve as an appropriate starting point for a comprehensive review and redefinition of the question of security in all its aspects. In spite of the importance of the administrative and financial reform of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other organs, the influential Powers have not given the question of collective security adequate attention with a view to developing ways and means to preserve international peace and security.

The international community truly must expand the scope of the principle of collective security if States are to be free from the fear of strategic threats to their national and regional security. It is my conviction that the Security Council, as the sensory nerve-centre of the United Nations, in addressing the questions of world security, should be guided by certain collective security principles that could be activated in the current circumstances. Furthermore, it is possible to increase the use of practical preventive diplomacy to prevent the eruption of conflicts by containment and by speedily eliminating their causes.

In view of the importance now being attached to the question of collective security, thought should be given to the development of mechanisms for maintaining relations between the Security Council and regional organizations, in accordance with United Nations purposes and principles. This is relevant to some particularly important regions of the world, such as the Arabian Gulf region, which is afflicted by tensions that threaten the established fundamentals of the region's security.

To insure the region's security and stability, it is imperative that relations among all States of the region be based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and recognition of every State's national sovereignty. The territorial and border claims that are currently being made in the Arabian Gulf region, and are aimed at changing established and traditionally accepted boundaries, upset the security and stability of the region. We believe that the optimal and most judicious course for avoiding that prospect is to respect the *status quo*, refrain from any claims — total or partial — and to settle any consequential differences by peaceful means acceptable to the parties to the dispute.

With regard to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the State of Bahrain, being keen to maintain security and stability in the Gulf region, stresses the need for Iraq to meet fully the requirements of international legality and fulfil its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the release of Kuwaiti and other prisoners of war.

While it asserts that care should be given to ensuring the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Bahrain welcomes the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations and calls for the accelerated implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) on the issue of "oil for food", an essential step towards alleviating the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people.

On another matter, the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa — all of which belong to the United Arab Emirates — is a cause of concern for Bahrain and other member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in view of the serious ramifications for the security and stability of the region and good-neighbourly relations among its States.

The State of Bahrain therefore calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond urgently to the appeals of the United Arab Emirates to solve the question of these islands through serious bilateral talks and other means available for the peaceful settlement of disputes through reconciliation among States.

Economic security is also fundamental to a world of security and peace. In recent years, significant developments have taken place in the sphere of international economic relations as a result of the interdependence that has come to characterize the world economy, especially since the establishment of the World Trade Organization. Over the past four decades, the United Nations has addressed development problems, issued a number of declarations and formulated a number of strategies in this respect, but the desired results have been elusive.

We believe that development challenges to any country can be met only by taking into account the global economic system as a solution that involves the development of a comprehensive framework combining international and local efforts, with a view to improving the performance of the economy in a favourable environment wherein local and regional circumstances and the priorities and special conditions of each individual State are taken into consideration.

The topic of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held this year in South Africa, was the promotion of sustainable growth and development in the context of the globalization and liberalization of the world economy. This reflects a global interest in addressing the shortcomings of the world economy. In this connection, we would like to emphasize the importance of the role of the Organization in the enhancement of solidarity and interdependence for the sake of promoting development in all countries.

With regard to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Istanbul this year, it is our hope that the principles, commitments and plan of action of the Conference will be implemented. It is also our hope that the World Food Summit, to be held in November in Rome, will make recommendations to ensure and enhance world food security.

Environmental problems continue to be a cause of concern for the human race in view of their potential threat to our planet. Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference of Environment and Development, is

a framework for the protection of the environment. Persuaded that collective action is important for the protection of the environment, the State of Bahrain has paid special attention to the issue of the environment. Accordingly, an Emir's decree approving Bahrain's accession to the Convention on Biological Diversity and another on environmental law were issued. The latter establishes an environmental body that can exercise all authorities with respect to environmental planning and policies and the supervision of their implementation.

The third element, in our view, is social security, without which societies would be unable to sustain human progress or protect national security. As far as the people are concerned, it is an important precondition for the achievement and preservation of peace and security within and among States. This fact was stressed by the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen last year.

Responsibility for social development is based on two pivotal factors: national responsibility and collective commitment, as reflected in the combined efforts of the international community. In this connection, it must be mentioned that the ability of societies to effect social development is fundamentally connected to the objectives of economic progress and comprehensive development in all their human dimensions. Any international commitment to preserve the stability and security of societies within the framework of economic and social development should take into consideration the cultural content of social development and the various national factors.

The State of Bahrain — in the light of its conviction that peace in the region is a strategic alternative that must inevitably be based on justice, the restoration of rights and the prevalence of security — follows closely and with deep concern the new developments in the Middle East peace process. Peace is the only course that can lead to reconstruction, prosperity and the well-being of the peoples of the region. It can end the cycle of violence and war which the region has suffered for so long.

The progress achieved in the context of the Madrid Conference, whose underlying principles were the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with international legality and the principle of "land for peace", should continue without regression. We must build on it.

The State of Bahrain views with deep concern the serious events that have taken place in the past few days as a result of the policies of the present Israeli Government. These are manifest in its perpetuation of the occupation and its refusal to honour the agreements made and to withdraw from occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, as provided for in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as in the Madrid terms of reference, whose underlying principle is "land for peace".

We call upon the international community, in particular the two sponsors of the peace process, and the States of the European Community to persuade Israel to end its repressive practices against the Palestinian people and to resume negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories in accordance with the agreements concluded between the two parties. They should also stress the necessity of resuming negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. These negotiations should aim at achieving just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and at insuring the attainment by the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights. These include their right to establish their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan Heights up to the boundaries of 4 June 1967 and occupied southern Lebanon.

Without doubt, in violating the principles upon which the peace process is based, reneging on the agreements and commitments reached within the framework of this process and procrastinating in the implementation thereof, Israel will drastically set back the peace process and lead the region back into a new cycle of tension and violence.

It is regrettable that Israel continues periodically to act repressively against the Palestinian people and repeatedly to violate the sanctity of Islamic holy places. We denounce the Israeli authorities' opening of a tunnel beneath Islamic archaeological sites. This is calculated to judaize and efface the Islamic features of the occupied Palestinian territories. This act has caused indignation and anger in the occupied Palestinian territories in particular and in the Islamic world in general. It is a hostile act directed against the holy Islamic sites and a provocation against the sentiments of Arabs and Muslims.

In condemning Israeli practices and repressive actions, which have resulted in scores of deaths and hundreds of injuries, we demand that Israel end these

practices and forswear its plans to change the Arab and Islamic character of the city of Jerusalem or to violate the sanctity of the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque. We call upon the international community to urge and pressure the Israeli Government to renounce political policies of expansion and settlement in Arab territories and to comply with the requirements of peace and security in the region.

We consider the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to be one of the most important issues in the field of disarmament. We look forward to the day when we can feel secure because all nuclear tests have been ended and all nuclear weapons eliminated. Bahrain therefore signed the Treaty last week because it considers it a step in the right direction of eliminating these weapons.

The elimination of all weapons of mass destruction is bound to enhance confidence and security at both the international and regional levels. We have supported the initiatives seeking to make the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf region, a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Bahrain has done so in the deep conviction that the security and stability of the region should be maintained, that the region should be saved from the calamity of these weapons of mass destruction and that the States of the region should be able to implement development projects and raise the standard of living of their peoples. In this connection, I would like to applaud the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty in Cairo on 11 April 1996, which established Africa as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Terrorism in all forms is a global phenomenon whose threat today is not confined to a particular people or region, but endangers security and peace in numerous countries. Bahrain has repeatedly denounced and deplored this dangerous phenomenon in more than one international forum. Its eradication requires cooperation and the coordination of efforts. Bahrain now calls for concerted efforts for the implementation of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, adopted at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It also calls for cooperation in the identification of terrorist activities, their prosecution, the adoption of deterrent measures and preventing terrorist organizations from using the territories, information media and facilities available by virtue of the respect given to civil liberties in certain countries, in order to mount hostile activities against other countries.

The State of Bahrain would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the sisterly and friendly States that lent their support at a time when it was the target of foreign-aided terrorist acts aimed at disturbing the security and stability enjoyed by our State and other Arabian Gulf States. The events witnessed in the State of Bahrain and other States in the region and throughout the world demonstrate the extent of the danger of terrorism and how far the terrorist elements can go in manipulating laws and international human-rights principles to serve their own subversive and terrorist ends.

The fighting in Somalia and Afghanistan has brought devastation and destruction to the peoples of the two countries. With a view to sparing the lives of innocent people, we appeal anew to all parties to the conflict in each of the two Islamic countries to embark on a serious dialogue to reach a political settlement of their differences.

We welcome the outcome of the elections that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the framework of the Peace Agreement signed in Paris as a result of negotiations held in Dayton in 1995.

We support all efforts to restore peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, urge respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country and emphasize the necessity of economic reconstruction and rehabilitation as a means to buttress the peace process.

With regard to the question of Cyprus, we call upon the United Nations to continue its contacts with the parties concerned so that direct talks can be resumed with a view to reaching a final settlement.

The question of the development and reform of the United Nations is in the forefront of issues that have captured the attention of Member States. Extensive discussions on this matter have taken place over the past few years, especially in relation to the question of equitable representation on the Security Council. It is our view that the reform of the Security Council is not only a matter of institutional dimensions and ramifications, but that it also constitutes a challenge that the international community should address thoughtfully.

The State of Bahrain has consistently supported the Security Council and its role in and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. It has also joined the international community in the implementation of resolutions relevant to international legality and related commitments. Bahrain is the host

country for the Field Office of the Special Commission established under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and has provided the Office with all the facilities needed for the successful performance of its duties. In this respect, the State of Bahrain wishes to recall with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, submitted to the General Assembly at its current session, in which he praises the support given by the Government of Bahrain to the activities and work of the Office.

Since it joined this Organization, the State of Bahrain has always adhered to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and therefore looks forward to playing a more active role in this regard. The nomination of Bahrain to Security Council membership for the period 1998-1999 — which received the unanimous endorsement of the Group of Asian States, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council and the support of other Member States — is a confirmation of its standing as a peace-loving State and an indication that it wishes to play a more active role in the maintenance of world peace and security.

The characteristic distinction of the late twentieth century is that relations among nations are based on interrelated, mutual and diverse interests in various political, economic and social fields. This interrelatedness of interests has formed a sort of common culture among nations and has created a favourable climate for the exchange of ideas and the tools of knowledge, thus enabling cultural and intellectual interaction among peoples of the world and enhancing a deeper understanding of the bases of world peace and security, an objective which the United Nations has sought to achieve over the past five decades.

In view of this fact, it behooves us to lend the Organization support and encouragement so that it may be able to play its role in a civilized world and carry out its noble tasks of ensuring the achievement of world security, prosperity and peace.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Ablassé Ouédraogo.

Mr. Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): Like some others present here, I too have had the opportunity to visit Malaysia. Malaysia is a great country, both in size and because of its outstanding successes in many areas. But it is a great country above all because of the quality of the women and men who govern it and who represent it on the international scene. Ambassador Razali Ismail is without doubt one of its most eminent representatives. I am therefore convinced that he will preside over the work of our 51-year-old Organization with great cheer and efficiency. I convey to him and to all the elected members of the Bureau my congratulations and best wishes for success.

I would also like to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, whose personal qualities and wealth of experience guided the work of the historic fiftieth session in an exemplary manner. We wish to convey our great gratitude to him.

Finally, I pay well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his outstanding efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations and for the talent and tenacity with which he has guided the Organization in these difficult times.

In July 1996, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted in Yaoundé, Cameroon, a declaration expressing its appreciation for and stressing the work done by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the helm of the United Nations. According to tradition and the rules of fairness, Africa is entitled to a second mandate, which we hope will come about.

The current trends on the international scene are disquieting. The sovereign equality of States and the principle of free trade are being damaged by unilateral measures, despite the fact that the General Assembly of the United Nations has reaffirmed these principles and the strict respect that should be accorded to them. Moreover, we are facing a financial crisis that is essentially caused by the default on payments of assessed contributions due to the Organization. The overwhelming majority of speakers who have preceded me have said that this practice is unacceptable, particularly on the part of those who have the capacity to pay.

The procedures and decision-making process of the Security Council are still fairly opaque, despite some minor openings. The geographical origins of the permanent members run counter to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The cause of this is historical, but this perception is now more widespread and stark, 51 years after the creation of the Organization. Yet today, through the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council, a veritable body of substantive

international law, armed with sanctions and strewn with ad hoc tribunals, is emerging. After 51 years, the General Assembly, the pedestal and guarantor of this structure, finds itself stripped of its powers and even of its functions.

We cannot compare the General Assembly to the Security Council but recent developments in these two bodies have accentuated their differences instead of emphasizing their complementarity, which is not a healthy situation. Ironically, this situation coincides with the vehement, ongoing clamour for transparency and democracy everywhere. The reform of the United Nations system is understood in various ways and we have yet to find the formula that can be supported by everyone. Difficulties arise from the demands of some and the reluctance of others. Clearly, reform must be a joint effort or it will not come about. We are concerned because all of these combined factors might encourage the disturbing trends to which I referred earlier.

Indeed, the financial situation of the United Nations is central to the significance and future of our Organization. An institution, a community of men and women, can be created by force — can, for a time, be maintained by force — but it is not force that makes them last. The idea of leadership is based on the ability to take decisions as well as on moral authority. Moral authority is based on the ability to convince the majority in a lasting and complete way. To be followed without conviction is to run the risk of abandonment as soon as short cuts can be safely taken.

The joint aspiration of the States Members of the United Nations was, is and must remain that of following a common path beneficial to all. It is no coincidence that in the Charter, drafted at the end of a conflict in which Powers imposed themselves on other Powers, spirit and letter came together so that States large and small could feel involved as much in the responsibilities and decision-making as in the outcome. Hence the principle of the sovereign equality of States, who assumed that, regardless of their size or importance, each should participate to the best of its ability in the functioning of the Organization because, in this way, each worked equally to attain the principles and purposes of the Charter. Nor is it a coincidence that those which bore a greater burden in this respect were given a privilege in the Security Council, though it was to be exercised on behalf of all and for the benefit of all.

What is happening nowadays? The United Nations is unique. It is political. Its role and its objectives are very special. How can we, therefore, try to see it as a company whose shareholders want to move it in a particular direction on the basis of the number of shares they hold? How could we continue to call ourselves United Nations? The United Nations has charge over destinies and people. It is also an institution that must be managed, but one in which everyone has a place.

I have dwelt at length on this point because Burkina Faso is a community of men that understands, appreciates and supports the fact that the United Nations is irreplaceable. It is an instrument which has no equal and we desire a world of fraternity and progress.

Africa is fighting for its development, although beset by crises and conflicts, such as those in Liberia and Burundi. In Liberia, after the events of April 1996, the summit meeting of the Committee of Nine and a certain open-mindedness on the part of faction leaders calmed the situation, permitted the nomination of a new Head of State in the person of Ms. Ruth Perry, opened up prospects for the holding of elections. We encourage this trend.

In Burundi, a military *coup d'état* swept away civilian rule, but the fraternal States of the subregion rejected *fait accompli* by ordering sanctions. We are therefore concerned by the situation in that country, which has already been traumatized by numerous ethnic conflicts. The international community should pay heed to that and provide resources.

Turning to the subject of Taiwan, Burkina Faso would refer to the principle of universality in the matter of representation of 22 million people. We hope that an ad hoc committee will be established.

Poverty is on the rise. It is the result of the policies of the countries that control the markets. Poverty is also the consequence of unequal distribution among the developing countries. In all cases, statements on both sides very often sound like incantations crashing against the wall of cold implacable reality. The idea of globalization, paradoxically, goes hand in hand with that of fragmentation, both political and economic. The world conferences held over the past six years have promoted the concept of partnership. We still need to give that concept real content and weight. Unfortunately, we still possess neither of these despite real efforts by some partners of the North. Invective, tirades of complaint and exhortations have not advanced the debate nor brought us closer to the right solutions.

From 16 to 20 September 1996, we held the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. We thank Ambassador Owada and his country, Japan, for their interest in the development of Africa. However, we must acknowledge that the results of our negotiations with our other partners continue to fall short of our expectations, needs and priorities, although Africa has largely met its commitments. The same goes for the mid-term review undertaken by the United Nations Children's Fund on the outcome of the World Summit for Children. Increased resources are necessary and expected.

Self-control is the beginning of wisdom, but it is not enough without an enabling environment. From the discussions in the Uruguay Round to the creation of the World Trade Organization, this point is constantly being borne out. Solidarity, the key word, must prevail and guide our actions if we want a global village, not just a series of enclaves that are more or less fortunate and in the long run condemned to mutual destruction.

Multilaterlism could prevent that fate, especially since we are now seeing that the State is surrendering control over certain elements of its sovereignty. Everywhere, structures and organizations with varying degrees of legality are transcending States and establishing transnational networks and relations. It is therefore imperative that we keep pace with these trends and adapt now and in the future our special instrument, our common instrument: the United Nations at the service of peoples. Political will is what will make the difference.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.